

It was February, 1982, that a proposal was made by the BHA to establish a special taxing district. The measure failed twice in the legislature, finally to be passed by the Board of County Commissioners in December, 1985, under the new "Home Rule" guidelines.

In March Look For
... Spring Sports At Bloomingdale
... BHA Officers
... What New Mall Means To Local Merchants

The Bloomingdale Gazette

Volume XV, Number 2

Published by the Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc. February 1995

BHA Blurbs

Hats Off To Volunteers

The BHA extends a very big "Thank You" to all the volunteers who participated in the Park East clean-up last month. Everyone from teenagers earning service hours to adults with tikes in tow worked hard to spruce up the grounds.

Special thanks to Gena Schaffer for coordinating the volunteer efforts and for shoveling a few yards of dirt herself.

The following deserve special mention for all their hard work: Walter, Rachel and Christopher Schaffer, Kristen Panfilio, Mr. and Mrs. Tim Lawson, Jaime Chapal, Gloria McSpadden, Brenda McSpadden, Jana Escribano, Jon-Erik Escribano, Jennifer Cacioppo, Jessica Schnebly, Tiara Cruse, Carrie Delavan, Michael Davis, Nikki Sarg, Joel, Barbara and Clark Goldentyer, Laura Yox, Mark Yox, Ted Grable, and Butch Harris for the wheelbarrow and tools.

See photos inside this issue.

BHA Board Elections

This month's meeting of the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 7:30 in the Community Office, 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale. Officers for the 1995 term will be elected from among the current board members. Dues paying BHA members are welcomed to attend.

Gazette Board Elections

At this month's BHA meeting, five individuals will be chosen to serve on the board of *The Bloomingdale Gazette*. The board is elected by the BHA board, which is its only shareholder, and serves as the liaison between the newspaper and the BHA board. *The Gazette* is a for-profit corporation owned solely by the non-profit BHA. *The Gazette* board meets once a month before BHA meetings to discuss the issues related to the newspaper. Its current president is Rick Oros. Other board members seeking reelection are Randy Wolf, Joe Liguori, and Pam Liguori.

Spring Fling

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, April 22. You have a date with your neighbors. The occasion is the Spring Fling community picnic at Park West. The BHA is planning a day of food, fun, and entertainment, plus educational exhibits by various county agencies.

If you missed the renewed community picnic last June, make sure not to miss this year's get-together. If you attended last June's affair. We'll see you again on April 22 when you'll be in for a bigger and better time.

Membership Sky Rockets

Nearly 1000 households responded to the 1994 membership drive of the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association. This is an incredible 50% increase over 1993 membership, and over 200% increase in membership since 1991. The tremendous work of Ted Grable and Jim Wiley is applauded. Of all the communities in East and West, the residents of Fox Run led the pack with nearly 60% membership. What an enthusiastic group of residents! The Greens, Fairway Manors, and The Estates were second.

Thank you for your support of the BHA.

Board Members Re-Elected

Incumbent BHA board members Rick Oros, LaWayne Wyatt, Anne Underwood and Russ Lembke were re-elected to a two-year term at last month's BHA meeting. Two positions remain vacant, but there were no nominations from the floor. Residents who would like to serve on the BHA board, should make their intent known by calling 681-2051, or by sending a letter to board secretary, Rick Oros, at 3232 Lithia Pinecrest, Suite 101, Valrico, 33594

ParkEast Volunteer Clean-Up

Teens and adults
pitched in to help
spruce up Park
East. More photos
inside on page 8.



They get by with a little help from their friend.

County References Available In Community Office 'Library'

by Gazette Staff

Everything you always wanted to know about unincorporated Hillsborough County is now at your fingertips. Well, perhaps not that close, but much closer than trudging downtown and battling your way through a maze of departments.

The BHA has acquired several reference books that are on hand for the residents' use in the community office located in the Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale. In addition to the volumes available for in-office use, there is a limited number of copies of the county's 1995 Directory of Services which are available free of charge while quantities last.

In it, you may read about everything from aging

services to zoning. A comprehensive list of phone numbers to all the county's departments is also included.

The reference books are voluminous binders filled with a wealth of information about Hillsborough County's future. Comprehensive plans are outlined in areas of recreation, land use, capital improvements, transportation, stormwater management, solid waste and housing to name a few.

Also available is a Land Development Code book which outlines zoning and development requirements.

Residents may refer to these sources during regular business hours, 9:30 to 12:30 Monday through Friday, except holidays.

NIP Report: Keeping Bloomingdale Beautiful

by Pat Radel

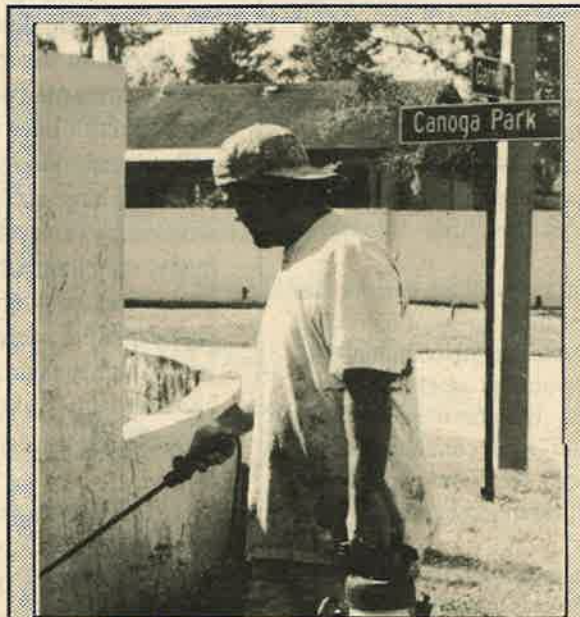
The Neighborhood Involvement Program and its volunteers have been in low gear since before the holidays, but hope to get back in "drive" now that all the shopping, baking, and visiting are over. The calls coming into the Bloomingdale Community Office have been very slow, but seem to be picking up now.

The volunteers try to take care of each call as they are received. Sometimes callers leave their name, but some prefer to remain anonymous, which is fine. All calls are treated equally. Residents who call and leave a name, receive a return call with the NIP volunteer's findings. Most complaints are taken care of in short order, but some are more involved and are hard to resolve quickly. The most important thing to remember is that the NIP is staffed by all volunteers who are doing their best to look into complaints and to help resolve problems in the Bloomingdale neighborhoods.

The NIP hopes residents have noticed the numerous fences that have been repaired or replaced throughout the community. The repairs do make a positive difference in keeping up the community's appearance as when it was first built.

One of the main complaints received by the NIP is about cars parked on treelawns or front lawns. This is not a county code violation, but a violation of deed restrictions.

See NIP, page 9



Painting Begins Again

by Rozel Sciulli

Stretched out in a straight line, the walls of Bloomingdale East and West and their interior communities might possibly rival the Great Wall of... well, it would be long. Not only long but quite a task to maintain.

Each year, the Special Taxing District budgets several thousand dollars for wall painting and

See PAINT, page 9

BLOOMINGDALE COMMUNITY PAGE

The Bloomingdale Gazette

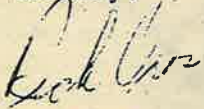
Dear Readers,

Bloomingdale will be changed forever. This month will bring with it the greatest change in the history of our community, **The Brandon Town Center Mall** has arrived!

This change will not eliminate our basic community concerns, nor will it ensure community peace and prosperity. But with the combined efforts of more people to understand and use this change positively, we as a community can reinforce the instinct and desire for cooperation that are basic to the human condition. By getting involved with the BHA you can help monitor these community changes. With your help and assistance the BHA board can better plan the future of our community.

These changes should not bewilder you, it should challenge you. In understanding and being part of the changes, it can reduce the fear it holds and increase the hope it brings; and while life for each of us is an ever-increasing amount of rain, by understanding these changes we can continue to build new bridges.

Sincerely,



Rick Oros

STD Takes Bids For Cellular Phone

The STD will be taking sealed bids for its cellular phone at the monthly meeting, Monday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Royal Oaks of Bloomingdale Plaza. Offers must be in a sealed envelope and either mailed to the above address (mark it 'mobile phone') or can be brought to the meeting. The bid is open to everyone.

The NEC Model T-120, portable cellular phone comes with; phone, antenna, battery pack, stand and recharger that offers 100 minutes of talk time and 20 hours standby.

Our Times

Mall Madness Makes Local Shopping More Appealing

by Rozel Sciuilli

In a few short days the wait will be over. Get those credit cards ready, those that are still valid after Christmas, because a shopping extravaganza is about to hit the Brandon area. **THE MALL WILL FINALLY BE OPEN.**

For months we have watched it rise from the dairyland dirt, at first appearing like the sun on the horizon with its bright yellow wash and domed roofline, only to change hues to the more subtle earth tones of the Florida landscape that surrounds it.

Over 120 stores will open later this month with more to come: And its location along the corridor will entice shoppers from nearby counties, but none as frequently as those from Brandon and especially Bloomingdale.

Not a person among us has failed to say in the last month, "I can't wait for the mall to open."

It surely is a great boost for this area's economy, for the jobs it has created and for the volumes of merchandise that will pass through its doors.

Already a popular shopping district of specialty stores that surround it, Brandon Town Center is sure to become one of the most popular spots in Hillsborough County.

I know I will never need to visit a mall in Tampa again. Yet, malls aren't all they are promoted to be. And for that reason, Brandon Town Center shopping trips will be a novelty.

Who wants to drive around in circles

waiting for the gods of parking to perform a miracle? And suppose there is only one store I need to visit for just one item. Do I really want to walk the length of two football fields to get there? Mall marketing types are hoping so, because they know my mission will be interrupted by sidetracks into shops other than the one I originally set out for.

No, I think I will probably be content to shop right here in Bloomingdale for most of my needs. We have clothes and shoes and greeting cards and health food and gift shops and books and toys. No need to explore further.

After all the mall excitement dies down, remember that our local merchants have provided services to this community for far longer. They are our neighbors. They hire our children. They have tended to our needs. They deserve our continued patronage. You may pay five cents more for an item, but you'll make it up in gas and drive time.

The business men and women of Bloomingdale have created a hometown shopping atmosphere that has been quite comfortable for us. They have worked hard to learn our needs and wants. This is sort of like the "buy products made in the U.S." slogan, only on a more localized scale. Either way, it means "spend your money where you live."

Okay, so go visit the mall with its big, fancy stores. But remember to come back to where they know your name. Shop Bloomingdale first.

OFFICERS

BLOOMINGDALE HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road
Suite 101
Valrico, Florida 33594
681-2051

Randy Wolfe	President	229-3321
Ted Grable	Vice President	685-7193
Rick Oros	Secretary	685-0866
Jim Wiley	Treasurer	684-7825

Directors

Michael Davis	685-0016
Russ Lembke	689-2829
Patricia Radel	651-0210
LaWayne Wyatt	685-2072
Anne Underwood	653-4677

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

Peter Aluotto	President	685-1727
Chris Hering	Vice President	654-0235
Sue Hadden	Treasurer	685-6106
Michaela Sykes	Corresponding Secretary	653-0066
Fred Uphoff	Recording Secretary	685-3013
Sue Boucher	Trustee	653-2018
Rick Pitrowski	Trustee	661-1344
Greg Atkinson	Administrator	759-6670

Bloomingdale Mobile Watch

Core Committee		
LaWayne Wyatt	Coordinator/Scheduler	685-2072
John Britton	Treasurer	681-1553
Steve Schneider	Equipment Manager	685-8378

Members

David Guy	681-5943
Paul Kelmer	681-9701
Rick Borling	684-2022

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

P. O. Box 3132
Brandon, Florida 33509-3132

William Grace	President	685-2817
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The Bloomingdale Gazette

3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road • Suite 101
Valrico, Florida 33594
681-2051

Monday - Friday 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Directors

Rick Oros	Pam Liguori
Randy Wolfe	Joe Liguori

Bloomingdale Homeowners Association, Inc.

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Rozel Sciuilli	President
Mandi Oros	Editor
Brian Bergren	Correspondent
Vanessa Clark	Writer
Donna Heinz	Writer
June Oros	Office Manager/Layout Editor
JoAnne Scoff	Graphics
Shirley Farrer	Ad Representative
Circulation Assistants	Distribution Manager
	Rent A Kid delivery system

Accounting services provided by: Robert Morris, 3302 Bell Shoals, Brandon, 33511

Statement of Operation

The Bloomingdale Gazette is also available free of charge at area newsstands: Publix, The Greater Brandon Chamber of Commerce, NationsBank, Mail Boxes Etc., Bell Shoals Cigo, Rainbow Mart, Kash & Karry, Nations Bank, Brandon Library, Sun Bank, Barnett Bank, and Farm Stores.

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MEETINGS

All meetings take place at the Bloomingdale Community Office. These are monthly public meetings and all Bloomingdale residents are invited.

Bloomingdale Special Taxing District

Second Monday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

BHA Board of Directors

Second Tuesday of the month at 7:30 p.m.

Bloomingdale Oaks Special Taxing District

First Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Mobile Watch & Neighborhood Watch

Watch this listing for dates & times. The meetings are held on a per need basis.



etter To The Editor

Water Pipe Corrosion Still An Issue

Dear Editor:

During the summer of 1993, our first summer in Bloomingdale, I read an article in your paper regarding many homeowners in our area experiencing pinhole leaks in their copper plumbing pipes. The article caught my attention because we had a leak of that kind within a few months of purchasing our six-year old home. By the end of the first year, we had had three leaks.

Fifteen months after we had purchased our relatively new home, we were advised by our plumber that we needed to replace all the incoming water pipes throughout the house with new copper pipes. After many phone calls and a plumbing bill for almost \$3,000, we still don't have a satisfactory answer as to why our original copper pipes deteriorated so rapidly.

I have spoken to plumbers, electricians, customer service workers at Tampa Electric and the county water department, and many, many neighbors. I have received different answers from the professionals, ranging from lightning strikes and a bad batch of copper, to the addition of strong chemicals to our water by the county water facility nearby. I've only found one or two neighbors who have NOT had any leaks, and quite a few who have had to endure the expense, the mess, and the upheaval of replacing the pipes as we have.

This is a serious problem to residents and warrants much more research. Have you heard from other residents with these circumstances? Do you have someone at your newspaper working on this? Do you know of any activities of the Bloomingdale Homeowner's Association related to this problem? I would be willing to help with collecting and compiling data and research, as I'm sure many other concerned residents would be. I would also be interested in an updated article in your paper regarding this situation.

Thank you for your efforts and for your helpful and informative newspaper.

Sincerely,
Barbara Hardcastle

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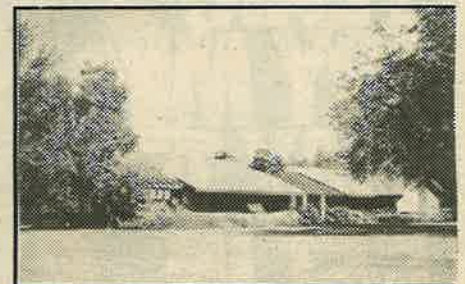
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School Cluster Plan Meeting Set

by Gazette Staff

A community update to inform parents of changes in the Hillsborough County School District "cluster plan" has been scheduled for Wednesday, May 10, at Bloomingdale High School's auditorium.

Bloomingdale's is one of the last in the series of meetings which began last month at all high schools which have not yet converted to the cluster plan, and parents of feeder schools such as Alafia, Lithia Springs, and Burns are encouraged to attend.

All meetings are scheduled from 7 to 9 p.m. and will include information on legal issues, conversion timelines, middle/magnet schools, exceptional student programs, construction needs, and school boundary considerations. School district personnel will be present to answer questions.

Under the cluster plan, students will only attend three schools from elementary through senior high. Single-grade centers are being eliminated and will become magnet schools with special emphasis ranging from computer technology to performing arts.

Bloomingdale's cluster is scheduled to be implemented in the 96-97 school year when sixth, seventh, and eighth graders will attend Burns and ninth through 12th graders will attend BSHS.

Those eighth graders currently attending Burns who are slated to attend the new Durant High School will attend ninth grade at Durant in the fall, according to Ken Allen, director of pupil assignment. Burns will have a ninth grade, but only for those who are scheduled to attend Bloomingdale High School the following year.

Life In These Times

The 1994 "Dumb Awards"

by Daniel Farrer

Well, the holidays are over again. It's really been a pretty good year for my family and friends. I hope the holidays were good to you, too.

I thought I would start the New Year with the first annual "Dumb Awards", conferred upon those persons, businesses, or governmental agencies that have done some thing in the past year that were, for lack of a better word, dumb! Hopefully the editor won't cut the article, so if this ends up in the paper this month, you'll know they went blind or are still suffering from fruit cake overdose.

The first "Dumb Award" goes to those unnamed fast food chains that never seem to get it right. This year, I've gotten "stuffed" at the drive thru more times that the last three years combined. I've been shorted on tacos, wrong ordered on the burgers, been given pickles when I wanted onions, and mustard when I requested mayo more times than I can count.

"Dumb Award" number two goes to the county water department for raising our rates for water again after telling us to conserve, conserve! They also get an additional award for their old toilet rebate program that pays \$125 for homeowners to replace their old toilets with water efficient ones. Probably a good idea, but you and I are

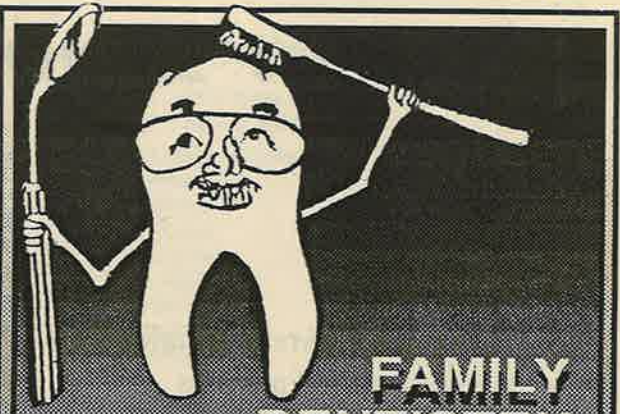
paying for the rebates with our higher water bills. I think I'm gonna get a new toilet next week.

The third "Dumb Award" goes to the State Vehicle Emissions program. According to information I heard on the radio a few weeks ago, the county has met the EPA's standard for emission levels and we technically don't have to have our vehicles tested after next year. However, the contract for the company that handles the inspections doesn't expire until 1997, and we still have to get our cars inspected. If that information is correct, we really got "stuffed" on that one. Next time, maybe the state should work up a more flexible contract.

The final "Dumb Award" goes to the Tampa Bay Buccaneers for waiting until the end of the season to finally

decide they were going to start winning games, after the team went up for sale. My hat is off to them for putting together the first good season since 1979. I know it took lots of hard work, guts and dedication, but maybe they wouldn't have been put for sale if they had put it together early on.

Happy Valentine's Day



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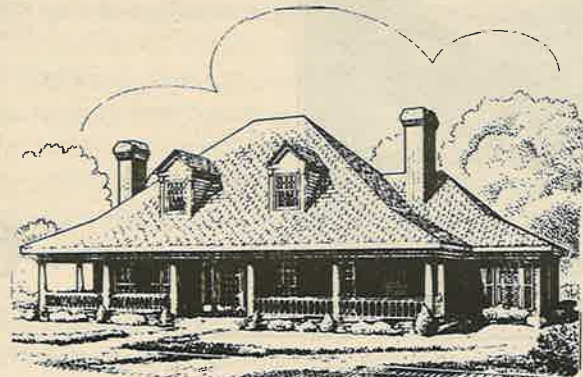
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Friends and Neighbors

LaWayne Wyatt Keeps A Watch

by Mandi Oros

LaWayne Wyatt, his two children and wife came to our neighborhood over a decade ago. The cross country move by the Wyatt's has proved to be a benefit to the community.

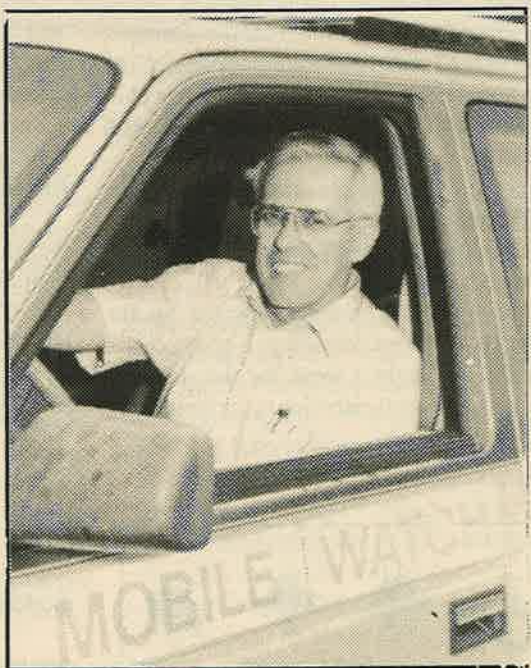
In late 1985 early 1986 Wyatt learned of the Mobile Watch security that patrols Bloomingdale. He strongly believed in the efforts and contributions that the program stood for, and he has remained uniformed in his thinking in the past years.

At first, his efforts were centered in the actual patrolling of the neighborhoods, and organizing the base stations. In 1990, Wyatt took over the Mobile Watch program as the Area Coordinator and, has nurtured it into one of the most successful programs ever sponsored by The Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association.

Not only is LaWayne involved in Mobile Watch, but, in 1993, he was elected to the BHA board of directors. This was a change for him, since he was accustomed to being the representative of the Mobile Watch to the BHA board, now he also shouldered the responsibility of making critical and crucial decisions regarding the future of the entire community.

Rick Oros, the secretary of the BHA, explained, "when the BHA board needs something special and is looking for help, LaWayne is the first to contribute. We as a board not

only depend on LaWayne for his great efforts in Mobile Watch but his insight regarding BHA board decisions". Wyatt's thorough understanding of the roads and streets of the community helped as he assisted Ted Grable, the membership chairman, in assessing the membership contribution



LaWayne Wyatt

by area. Wyatt is never off duty, he is the constant vigil in the community looking out for all of us. The members of Mobile Watch know they can call on Wyatt anytime of the day or night whenever they need assistance. He is known and respected by the personnel of the local sheriff's sub-station who often call upon him regarding Bloomingdale's safety and security.

For the past four years, Wyatt has helped organize the Brandon Christmas Parade, Veteran's Parade, and the Fourth of July Parade. He also involved himself in Bloomingdale's community picnics, BHA's sponsored circus and the areas 5-K Runs by organizing the traffic patrol.

Wyatt is currently employed by the department of education.



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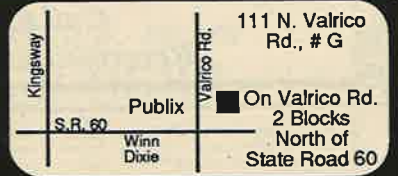
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Church & Synagogue News

St. Stephens Greets New Youth Director

by Donna Heinz

Parishioners at St. Stephen's Catholic Church welcomed Garry Kreines in October as the church's new senior high youth minister. Kreines moved to the area from Pennsylvania four years ago and has been assisting former youth ministers at St. Stephens for the past three years. He credits his girlfriend, Christine Caffray, with sparking his interest in youth work and he said he is "very glad she did."

Once a month, on Saturday, Kreines and the youth group travel to Villa Madonna in Tampa Heights. There, they provide a hot meal for the children from the surrounding neighborhood as well as help with craft projects. The local students play on the playground with the young children and organize games of volleyball, kickball and basketball with the older ones.

Two important youth events are coming up in the future. A state wide youth rally will be held March 25 at the Sun Dome and the National Catholic Youth Convention will be held in November in Minneapolis.

The former priests' residence, located on the grounds of the church, has been donated as a youth center which Kreines staffs one night a week for the students. Teens have a safe and supervised gathering place for playing

indoor and outdoor games or just to hang out.

Kreines is assisted by Caffray, Linda Gosselin and Bob Milbrandt. And, according to the students, they make a great team.

Youth will also be the emphasis at Crosswalk Christian Community Church on Feb. 25, when they hold a Youth Night. Double Edge, a group based in Bradenton, will perform the drama "Home Brew". Youth night focuses on junior high through college age students, however, since this production deals with issues involving family, parents are encouraged to attend with their child. Immediately following the performance, the Crosswalk Cafe will be open. Refreshments will be available for purchase and an "open mike" forum will be held for any who care to share a song, a testimony, or a favorite story.

Throughout 1995, Bell Shoals Church of Christ will "Look at the Book", a concentrated study of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. The Sunday school classes, morning and evening worship services, and Wednesday evening service will all cover different aspects of that week's theme. The church announced that weekly home Bible studies will be starting soon.

Immanuel Lutheran Church and Rescare Home Health will co-host the third annual Health Fair at the Family Life Center on Saturday, March 4, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The local community will be offered education on health care, health organizations and providers, as well as free health screening, lab work, food and fun. EKG's, hearing, and vision screenings and blood work will be

available at a nominal cost.

Have you ever wanted to learn how to pray more effectively? Bell Shoals Baptist Church is offering a four-week course entitled "Lord Teach Me To Pray" on Wednesday evenings from 6:50 to 8:15 beginning Feb. 22 and continuing through March 15. A daytime class will be available on Fridays, March 3-31, from 9 to 11 a.m.

St. Andrew's United Methodist Church invites residents to St. A.R.T. Your Week on Thursday evenings beginning Feb. 23. St. A.R.T. offers adults and children six weeks of classes dealing with personal enrichment and spiritual growth. Class times are 6:45 to 7:30 p.m. Dinner will be available at 5:45. For more information or to make reservations, call 689-6849.

St. Andrews is joining other area churches as a host site for SHARE-Tampa Bay (Self-Help and Resource Exchange). Volunteers who contribute two hours of service and \$14 a month will receive a food package valued at \$25 to \$35. Sign-up times at St. Andrews are before and after the 11 a.m. service on Sunday, Feb. 5 and Feb. 12, also on Monday morning Feb. 6 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 in the Fellowship Hall. Food packages will be distributed Feb. 25.

The fifth through 9th grade Sunday school classes of Congregation Beth Shalom will conduct Friday evening services on Feb. 10, at 7:30 in the social hall of Apostles Lutheran Church. The Sisterhood will host a Sweetheart Dance on Saturday, Feb. 18, from 7 to 10 p.m. in the social hall. Tickets are \$8 per person and this includes food and beverages.

Hats Off



Two Bloomingdale students were among those honored at a recent School Board meeting. Suzanne Mignone and Leigha Thomas were recipients of grant money made possible by the Hillsborough Education Foundation and the St. Petersburg Times for their work in early childhood.

Called Team Grants, it is the only pool of funds to which an individual student or group may apply for service projects relating specifically to early childhood programs. Each individual or group would apply for up to \$500 in grant money. Twenty-seven grants were extended

the 45 applicants from the county high schools.

Mignone was awarded \$500 for her program entitled "A Headsstart on Zoology". She was sponsored by her teacher, Joyce Haas. Thomas, sponsored by her teacher, Linda Weronick, was awarded \$498.85 for her program entitled "Let's Read."

Mrs. Kelly's fourth grade class project will be one of many from Alafia Elementary representing the school at the regional science fair. Her class tested the flame retardancy of pajamas. What they found is that with as few as three washings, pajamas classified as flame resistant, lost that quality,

and, in fact, do catch on fire.

Congratulations to Hillsborough County School Systems "Support Employee of the Year" nominees - Mary Jo Miller of Alafia; Susan Forkel of Lithia Springs; and Charlotte Krzyzanowski of Bloomingdale. Each was named the Support Employee of the Year at her respective school. Support employees are non-instructional personnel, but serve the school in some other fashion such as clerical, maintenance, or security.



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Area's Best Teachers Of The Year Announced

by Gazette Staff

David Brown, a world history honors teacher at Bloomingdale High School who makes up rap songs to make world war studies entertaining, is one of eight finalists for Hillsborough County Teacher of the Year for 1995-96.

Brown and the other finalists will be among those honored on February 16, when the Teacher of the Year will be announced. The annual banquet at the downtown Hyatt will honor 160 teachers nominated by their peers at their respective schools.

This area's other nominees are Lorraine Kelly from Alafia Elementary, Lisa Lynn Durand from Lithia Springs, Elizabeth Witters of Progress Village Sixth Grade Center, Maureen Vantrease of B. T. Washington, and Gail Butler from Burns.

Bloomingdale's Brown, a fourth year teacher, is a native of Tampa and a graduate of the University of South Florida. With the exception of a brief stint at East Bay High School, Brown's teaching career has taken shape at Bloomingdale where he makes the history pages come to life.

"I don't look at teaching as a profession," he said. "It's a way of life for me."

Brown also teaches sociology, is the co-sponsor of Leo Club and the Social Studies Club, and all year he has his hands full as athletic business manager for all sporting events that take place at the school.

Burns's teacher of the year, Gail Butler, has been at the local junior high school since it opened nine years ago. She has always taught health and each year sponsors a successful Health Fair at the school. She has a master's degree in health education and is currently working on a second master's certification in mental health counseling. She added that this does not mean she is looking to leave the teaching profession. At Burns, Butler has been active on the school's steering committee, has been a club sponsor,

and is a member of the in-school suspension team.

Lithia's Lisa Durand has taught emotionally handicapped children in grades kindergarten through sixth for two years, arriving from Pinecrest Elementary School. Durand's degree in Varying Exceptionalities makes her a valuable employee in the county, enabling her to instruct SLD, EMH, and EH children. The Louisiana native is now a Valrico resident.

Durand has implemented a behavior system in her classroom based on economics in which students earn or lose money for specific behaviors. She ties in her behavior modification program with practical lessons in personal and world economics, from balancing a checkbook to imports and exports.

Lori Kelly, Alafia's Teacher of the Year, is a fourth grade teacher in her sixth year at the local school. It took being a teacher's aide to convince the Tampa native that she wanted to become an elementary school teacher. So, after stints at Wimauma and Progress Village, she ended up at Alafia where she says she loves learning with her children and sharing in their creative ideas. In her class, for example, an innovative token program teaches the children to practice self-discipline. They may redeem the tokens at an auction at which they bid for classroom privileges.

The most recent idea earned Kelly's Cool Kids, as they are known, the People's Choice Award in a holiday gingerbread house contest at Westshore Mall in Tampa. Theirs was



Lori Kelly and her Alafia fourth grade class show off their "People's Choice Award".

one of 30 entries which guests paid to view. The benefit raised over \$2,000 for Boys and Girls Clubs of Tampa.

Elizabeth Witters, the media specialist at Progress Village, was "humbled" to be honored by her peers. Witters has been a media specialist for 11 years, and at the sixth grade center has developed a variety of incentive programs to encourage children to read including contests and trivia games, as well as the popular countywide Drop Everything and Read program. She is a graduate of the University of Illinois and has been a resident of the area for 34 years.

Maureen Vantrease teaches Gifted Language Arts and Drama at Booker T. Washington. She is in her fifth year at Washington, where she is a member of the steering committee and the school improvement team. Vantrease is past recipient of a Fulbright Hayes Scholarship which sent her to Mexico to study Latin American mythology and literature, which she includes in seventh graders' lessons. In her spare time, Vantrease participates in a professional theatre company.

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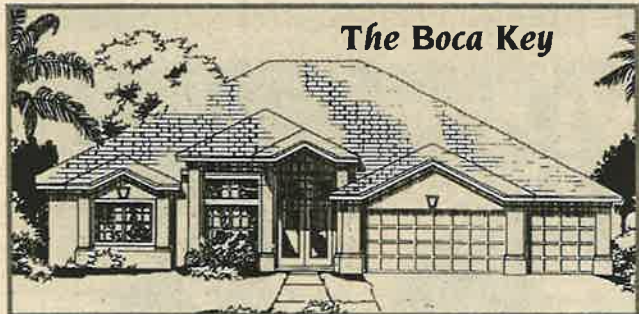
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Volunteers Help Spruce Up Park East



Volunteers of all ages contributed to the clean-up of Park East last month. Their hard work yielded a cleaner, neater, and well-groomed park setting. Holes were filled with dirt, trees were ringed with Christmas tree mulch, trash was collected and even the parking lot got a good sweeping. Teens contributed service hours, BHA board members were early risers, and little guys and gals did their part by riding wheelbarrows and standing patrol on the mulch mound. Community spirit rang true thanks to the fine crew of volunteers. Thank you one and all from the Bloomingdale Homeowners' Association.

Gena Schaffer (right) coordinated the volunteer efforts, and, it appears, the dirt patrol.



Michael Davis tries to catch 40 winks.



Christopher and Rachel Schaffer were in charge of the mulch mound.



It was a great day for diggin' dirt.



You say you need some more mulch?



Mechanical difficulties did not hamper progress.



Carrie, Jessica, Nikki, and Jennifer made sure all the holes were properly filled.

Bloomington Assistant Principal Moves to Durant

by Rozel Sculli

In what is expected to be the first of many changes in the Bloomington faculty, assistant principal Sherrie Sikes has left her post to help establish the curriculum and scheduling at the new Durant High School. She was tapped last month by Durant principal Ron Frost to fill his first administrative vacancy, that of assistant principal for curriculum.

Although Durant will be run by Frost and Sikes while it is in the final stages of construction, the new school is expected to take other teachers and administrators from the area's junior and senior high schools in the upcoming months.

Sikes, a charter member of the Bloomington faculty, opened the school as head of guidance. In August, 1993, after earning a second master's certification, she was promoted to Assistant Principal I at the growing school. A 1973 graduate of the University of Tampa, Sikes started her teaching career at Brandon High School in physical education and as the school's popular cheerleader advisor. While at Brandon, Sikes earned Teacher of the Year honors. After earning a master's degree in guidance, Sikes moved to Plant City High School in 1977 where she remained for 10 years until the new Bloomington school opened.

She said her 18 years in guidance

have prepared her for the challenges ahead as the person in charge of curriculum at a new high school. Sikes said she will carry with her all the lessons learned from Bloomington's principals whom she credits with building an excellent academic and extracurricular program filled with tradition.

"Mr. Harris built a wonderful school and Mrs. Stelter has continued in a first-rate fashion," said Sikes. "I am grateful to both. Mr. Harris started the Bloomington tradition and Mrs. Stelter has carried it with enthusiasm and hard work."

Sikes said that although leaving a school she helped establish was an emotional time for her, she is excited about working with Frost with whom she has a professional history - she having taught his son, and Frost having been the principal at her older daughter's junior high school.

"I'm looking forward to working with Mr. Frost, he and I share the same student-centered philosophy."

"This is an exciting time because of new educational programs and new technology that will be in place at Durant. We are getting away from traditional methods of lecture and testing and are increasing student-teacher interaction."

NIP, from page 1

Residents who are guilty of parking their car in this manner are asked to think about their neighbors and their neighborhood's appearance.

The BHA extends thanks to all the homeowners who do help make the community a desirable place to live by following county code and deed restrictions.

Do you see things in your neighborhood that bug or irritate you? If you would like to change things, call the Bloomington Community Office at 681-2051 or stop in at 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Royal Oaks Plaza, and get involved as an NIP volunteer.

It doesn't take much time and it can be quite rewarding to you and the community. Volunteers are given a training session conducted by Dwayne Audette of the county code enforcement. The NIP must currently replace two volunteers, but it needs many more to insure that Bloomington's neighborhoods maintain a neat and safe environment.

Bloomington has grown by leaps and bounds in the five years I have lived here. Working together we can all be proud to say we live in Bloomington.

PAINT, from page 1

pressure washing, but the need for painting has become necessary more frequently than the STD would like.

With last summer's daily rains, the walls of Bloomington were left with a healthy growth of green algae. That's why last month the STD elected to have nearly 80% of the walls painted with a higher quality covering in the hopes that the need

will be less frequent. Work has already begun in the Estates.

"The walls are the first impression people get of our community," said trustee Fred Uphoff. "They should be clean all the time."

A budget amendment that would reapportion funds that had been set aside for security and direct them instead to wall painting and a better quality of paint is expected this month.

A Matter of Principal

Washington Seventh Graders Getting Organized

by Barbara J. Harvey
Principal

The adolescent student more often than not displays behaviors which are indicative of disorganization and poor usage of time. Often parents and teachers view this age group as forgetful, disorganized and unfocused. In order to train the students in the development of good organizational skills, the faculty with the urging of the principal at Booker T. Washington, decided to use a planning book called the School Agenda Book. This book is currently being used throughout the country in the middle/junior and senior high schools.

At Booker T. Washington, the book has been customized to fit our needs. Each student in the school has been assigned an agenda book with individual bar codes which serve as library cards. The books also serve as hall passes.

All students are expected to have the agenda book in their possession during each class period. The contents of the book include the topics

Setting Your Goals, Managing Your Time, Study Guide, General Resource, and Personal Reference.

Students have been taught how to use the book through the initial setting of goals for school performance, sports and personal life. Further, the students are taught time management skills through by following a few simple rules.

On a daily basis, students record assignments, grades, etc. Teachers write comments in the daily subject areas and elicit comments in return for the parents. This procedure has been a valuable tool in the communication between home and school. An incentive for students to use the book is the random awarding of prizes on a regular basis. The prizes may be food coupons or food items in the cafeteria.

At this point in the year, the inculcation of this book into our total program has been deemed a success. Students appear to realize that "if they plan to learn, they must learn to plan."

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Nominees Look To Military Academies

Bloomingtondale High senior Morgan Reese has been accepted to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and four other students have received nominations to various academies, according to U.S. Rep. Charles Canady.

The Congressman has nominated local students Benjamin Boehm and Michael Davis, as well as former Bloomingtondale resident Justin Theiss to one or more of the nation's military academies.

Reese, who received a Presidential Appointment, is the daughter of Lt. Col. (Ret.) and Mrs. Richard Reese. Her father is a West Point graduate and Reese has always wanted to attend the Academy since the time her family was stationed there during her elementary school years.

At Bloomingtondale, Reese has lettered in golf and cross country and she is a member of various service and honor clubs including Interact, Mu Alpha Theta, and both the French and National Honor Societies. Nominated by Sen. Bob Graham, Reese received her appointment in December from President Clinton, and has already been accepted by the Academy.

Boehm, who is in the International Baccalaureate Program at Hillsborough High, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Boehm of Valrico. He has been nominated to the Air Force Academy, Annapolis, and West Point, and is awaiting word of acceptance. Boehm is an Eagle Scout and Senior Patrol Leader at Troop 110 in Brandon. He is a violinist in the

school orchestra and belongs to several honor societies, including president of Mu Alpha Theta, the math honor society.

He is a member of the Calculus Team which recently won first place in the USF Math Bowl, and he was a member of the Science Bowl Team which won locally and represented the region at nationals last year in Washington, D.C. Boehm hopes to pursue a degree in aeronautical or chemical engineering.

Davis is the son of Col. (Ret.) Michael and Lois Davis. Nominated to both Annapolis and West Point, Davis is also an athletic recruit of the latter. As quarterback of the Bulls, Davis led his team to the best season Bloomingtondale has ever enjoyed in its brief history. In addition, Davis is president of the BSHS student body, a member of Key Club, and both the National and Science Honor Societies. Hoping to play football in college, Davis has also applied to Dartmouth, Columbia and Lehigh.

Former resident and Bloomingtondale student Justin Theiss has also received a nomination from the Congressman to the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. He is the son of Lt. Col Gary and Sherry Theiss, and he is currently a senior at Beaver Creek High School in Ohio where his family was transferred last year from Valrico.

Bulls Eye



by Kim Humphrey

In the spirit of the season of giving and compassion, the Leo Club of Bloomingtondale Senior High School has established for last year's season, a service event intended to enhance the holidays for many children who would otherwise do without presents and festivities.

Their goal was to interact directly with the disadvantaged children and to present them with gifts that the Leo Club members purchased. These special young people, with the help of their parents, wrote letters to Santa describing some of their ideas for gifts. It was

the hope of the Leo students that this experience served not only to bring toys and clothes to the children but also to help them to feel more inclined to interact socially, particularly those who were borderline ascetic.

This activity was planned for two days in December at the high school. Both engagements lasted approximately three hours.

The Community Foundation of Greater Tampa provided the Leo Club a grant of \$500 in order to fund transportation for these activities and for a follow-up field trip involving these same children in the spring.

This project is in line with Leo Club's mission to serve the community, and is of special meaning to the members as individuals in respect to their generally high socio-economic life-styles.

Bruin Beat



by Tiffany Waller

In the last month, the students at Burns Junior High have participated in many events. Some eighth grade English classes performed random acts of kindness. Other band members have been trying out for all-state band. Still, the ninth graders along with some of the eighth graders took the county mid-term exams.

Over Christmas vacation, Mrs. Owens's and Mrs. Anderson's English classes performed random acts of kindness around the community. Along with doing something for another person, some of the students did something that the community could benefit from. Two excellent examples would be how

one student spent hours helping a stroke victim decorate Christmas cookies, while another read to a vision-impaired relative.

The band members were also working hard this past semester. They practices until their skills almost reached perfection and then some more. The reason for all this practice being the all-state band tryouts. This is a special band whose players are selected. The band goes to events all over the state performing their fine music. Congratulations to those members who made all-state.

There are many students who are finally relieved that mid-term exams are finally over. This year, all eighth graders that were not taking ninth grade courses were exempt from the exams, but in their place, received a nine week's test. Students began their second semester of school on Jan. 24. Good luck to all the Burns students. Only 18 weeks to go!

BSHS Scores Higher Than State Average

When it comes to eleventh graders in the state of Florida, some of the best can be found right here in Bloomingtondale. Results of the high school competence test given to all eleventh graders, show that Bloomingtondale's juniors are tops in the county in communications, and a close second in mathematics, a few percentage points behind Plant High School in Tampa.

Ninety-seven percent of Bloomingtondale's 620 juniors passed the communications portion, tied for best in the county with students from Gaither and Plant, and eight percentage points higher than the state average. In mathematics, Bloomingtondale's 93% passing rate improved over last year's score and is well above the state average of 78%.

As a whole, Hillsborough County's nearly 6,000 eleventh graders surpassed the state average in both testing areas by 10 percentage points in mathematics and six points in communications.

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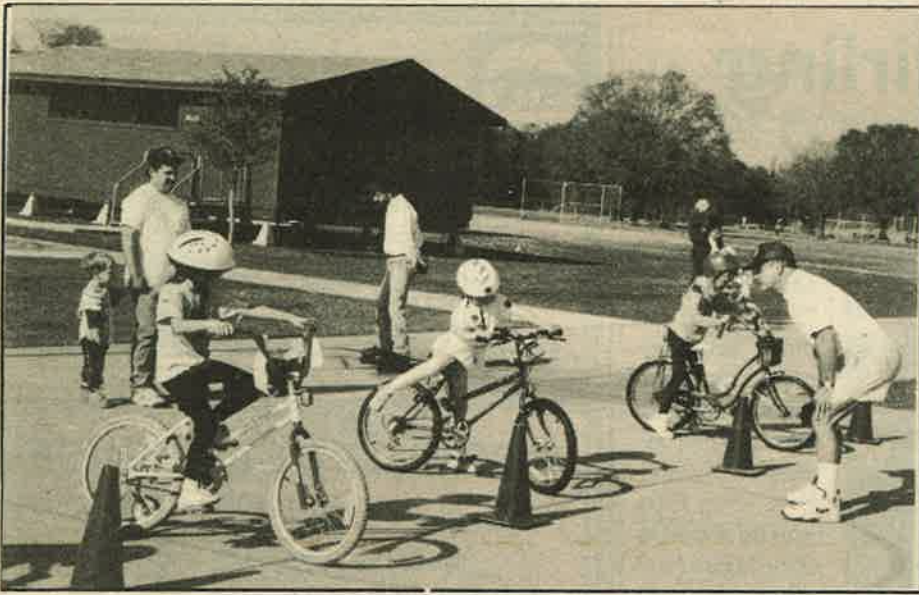
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Lithia Springs Elementary's PTA sponsored their second annual Bicycle Rodeo last week when children practiced skills and safety.

Lithia Lynx



Students Benefit From Projects

by Gazette Staff

Lithia Springs PTA has been busy with some great activities for students and their families. First, the National PTA program "Reflections" concluded at the school level with an artist showcase in the school media center. Each child had the opportunity to display their creation and take the time to enjoy the other entries as well.

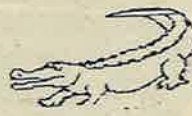
Mary Ellen Houghton, Lithia's art instructor, was the key ingredient in making this program a true "showcase" of student talents. Her enthusiasm, great ideas, and continuous support proved to be contagious as more and more students decided to participate this year.

Our next spring project is the first ever Lithia Springs memory book to be delivered in early May. The price is \$7, and order forms with additional information will be coming soon. What an ideal gift for the fifth graders as they leave their elementary years behind. The photos, artwork, and special memories of classmates and teachers will be their to keep and share.

There were lots of bikes, balloons, and smiling kids at the second annual "Safety Sensation" bike rodeo last month. Parent volunteers set up early in the morning and stayed a while longer as a steady parade of youngsters with helmets rode the "Rodeo" of bike drills and skills. Everyone had a great time testing their safety skills, while learning some new statistics about Hillsborough County and bike safety.

Thank you to all the sponsors and parents who made this year's rodeo a fun-filled community event.

Gator Tales



Students Earn Computer Money With Pennies

by Gazette Staff

Thanks to Alafia PTA president Suzy Wiesenhart's challenging the students to bring in their pennies so she could be "pied", over \$1,200 was collected for technology. Mrs. Wiesenhart, always the good sport, took seven creamy pies in the face from one teacher and students who were picked at random. The students were promised that if they raised at least \$500, she would agree to be the target of a pie toss. What a huge success!

The funds will be deposited in a trust fund that has been established for future technology at the school. As soon as enough money is earned, a computer system will be placed at Alafia. The Tech Boosters are planning another penny collection around St. Patrick's Day. Will

Mrs. Wiesenhart do this again? She said she may be talking to Mr. Haner!

Alafia's first Bike & Safety Rodeo is scheduled for Saturday, April 1, and the PTA is looking for volunteers. Moms and dads have already signed up to be in charge of skills, but there is a need for additional parents on the support team to assist. There is a meeting scheduled today at 4 p.m. in the Media Center. All Alafia parents or residents of the community are invited to join in on the efforts.

The PTA has lost some volunteers who have changed work schedules, are attending school, or who have taken on other commitments. As a result, the PTA is putting out a call to volunteers. Volunteers are needed in the areas of school clinic, art awareness, copy team, tutoring, and project safe call. Parents or grandparents who would have just a few hours a month to give to their child's school are asked to call Suzy Wiesenhart at 654-1123 or Nancy Goodman at 681-6605.

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Girls Learn More Than Twirling

by Rozel Sciulli

Peggy Capps has been teaching children to twirl a baton for 34 years. She started out doing it for free, but the principal at the then Wimauma High School said people would appreciate it more if they had to pay for it.

Those were the days when people attended high school football games to see more than 11 big guys roll around in the dirt. Spectators also fancied the half-time shows with brassy bands in spit-polished uniforms and majorettes who drew 'ahhs' if the baton they had just thrown 20 feet into the air landed in their nimble hands.

Over the years, majorettes have been replaced by flag bearers, so the interest in learning the skill of baton twirling has waned.

Except at Alafia Elementary School where some 60 girls from the Greater Bloomingdale area take baton lessons every Thursday afternoon from September through May. Some as young as three years old learn much more than finger twirls, however. According to Capps, they learn poise, confidence, posture, self-discipline, and rhythm.

But what happens to these budding majorettes after about the sixth grade?

"The art of twirling is so difficult that girls don't put the time into it that's necessary," said Capps. "There are so many activities offered to them that they don't put time into just one thing."

"Our little girls do as well as some high school girls."

And Capps would know, having taught the dancettes and majorettes at East Bay High School for several years.

A self-taught twirler, Capps formed the Hillsborough County Twirlettes and began offering lessons through the county recreation department and at public schools in southeastern Hillsborough county.

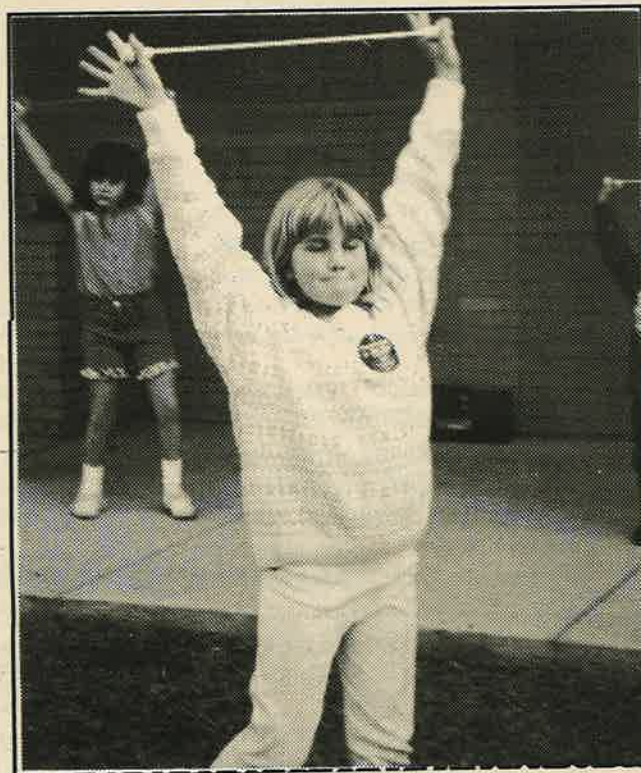
The local youngsters are taught by public school music instructors Brenda Johnson and Charla Kerwin, Capps' daughter. Another daughter, Karen Stanaland, is a first grade teacher at Alafia who also taught baton after school until last year.

Look for this area's talented girls in the Children's Gasparilla Parade on the Franklin Street Mall on Feb. 25, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Then, on March 4, they will march in the Plant City Strawberry Festival Youth Parade. A recital will top off the year in the Alafia

cafeteria in May when each girl will be presented a trophy, and those who want to may participate in the annual Brandon July 4th Parade.



It takes hours of practice to accomplish perfect formation.



Third grader Jamie Goodman is a baton beginner.

Kids Calendar Rated G "The Emperor's New Clothes"

Gullibility and human foolishness are the themes of the fairy tale "The Emperor's New Clothes" to be presented at Center Place on Friday, Feb. 17, at 11:45 a.m. The play, which is recommended for chil-



dren ages four through third grade, is one of Hans Christian Anderson's most beloved stories. Tickets of \$2.50 each must be purchased in advanced at Center Place. Call 685-8888 for further information.



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Tax Topics**Borrowing From 401(k) Possible**

by Robert J. Morris, CPA

Many individuals have experienced the pain of receiving benefits from a qualified Employer 401(k) plan, and most individuals believe they can not touch 401(k) plan funds until after retirement, if disabled, or possibly at age 59 1/2. This is not true in all cases. You could, depending on your specific plan, withdraw from your plan and not be subject to extra high taxes, if you really have need of the money. If your plan allows it, and most do, you can borrow from your plan and not pay tax on the borrowed money or 10% penalty to the IRS.

You can take a short-term loan for almost any reason providing you repay the plan quarterly over a period not to exceed five years. You can take a long-term loan for the new purchase of your primary residence. You can accommodate periodic repayments of interest and principal through your regular paycheck deductions to your 401(k) plan. The down side of this is the mortgage interest is not deductible since it is derived from funds not subject to income tax even though it is a primary residence mortgage.

The interest rates are low compared to market lenders, and you need to supply documentation such as the purchase

contract or other proof. Also, beware, if you leave your job prior to repayment of the loan, you probably will have to pay it off in full or be taxed and penalized on the unpaid balance. This event is treated as if you received a taxable distribution. However, if you leave due to retirement, you may make arrangements to pay through deductions from your retirement check.

Other ways to access your funds, but will be taxable to you without the 10% excise penalty tax, is due to hardship. This hardship must be significant money problems and other sources are not available, plus the distribution is needed to satisfy that need. Hardships are acceptable to purchase a primary residence, prevent eviction from your rented primary residence, pay significant health and medical expense, pay funeral expenses or to pay tuition for yourself, your spouse or your children.

If you meet the need or desire, you should contact your respected tax advisor to assist you on how to proceed. Should your loan or distribution not meet the proper criteria, you may be taxed on the amount and incur an additional 10% penalty.

**Business
Notes****Tax Help At Columbia Bank**

As a service to the community, Columbia Bank will offer free tax preparation service in all its five locations including Bloomingdale beginning Feb. 1 and continuing through April 15. This service is provided by volunteers from the American Association of Retire Persons (AARP) who have been trained in cooperation with the IRS. The service targets individuals of low to moderate income and

the elderly, but an AARP spokesman said they have the resources to help all taxpayers regardless of age or income. Two volunteers will be available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday each week.

Top Producer

Local realtor Frank St. Pierre was named the top Sales Producer and Top Listing associate for the month of December at Coldwell Banker's Brandon office.

Bloomingdale resident Luana Russell was also recognized by her company, RE/MAX Realty Unlimited, as the top listing agent for both October and November.

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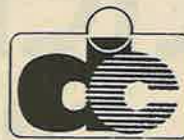
681-4164**Examine Business Opportunities Carefully****Special to The Gazette**

Many Americans dream of owning their own business and being their own boss. Some will achieve this dream. Unfortunately, others will fall prey to scams devised by some unscrupulous promoters of business opportunities.

A business opportunity is an offer to sell or lease someone's products, equipment, supplies or services needed to start up and carry on a business. The financial investments needed for business opportunities vary widely - from a few dollars to thousands. Types of business enterprises also vary and include such ventures as addressing envelopes or assembling toys at home, selling jewelry or personal care products, establishing vending machine routes to installing pay telephones.

Make sure any company that you attend to do business with provides a disclosure document that includes enough information for a prospective investor to make an informed investment decision. Check with the Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services to see if the business is required to file a disclosure document and, if so, if the business has complied.

Talk to current investors, ask questions, get all promises in writing, and listen closely to the sales presentation. Always get professional help from an attorney, accountant or other business adviser. The money spent on professional assistance and phone calls could save you a great deal of inconvenience, aggravation, and your investment.



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Local Soccer Kids Reach Finals

Special To The Gazette

The under-8 Ragin' Maniacs of Brandon were finalists in the recent third annual upper Pinellas Holiday Soccer Tournament. The Brandon team, with boys ranging in age from seven to eight years old, play under the Brandon Area Youth Soccer League and was one of two Brandon teams to compete with others from Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Polk counties.

The other Brandon team, the U-8 Swamp

Dawgs, performed well reaching the semi's before losing a well-played game to the Maniacs.

"Both Brandon teams came with competitive teams," said Maniac coach David Dodd. "Brandon was well represented and impressive."

The Ragin' Maniacs played teams from Bel Air, West

Pasco and Brandon before reaching the finals. Joel Magdovitz led in scoring with other goals scored by Mikel

Dodd and Stephen Cosgrove. Defense played an important part in the Maniacs' success with goalies Will Gibson and Patrick Davidson stopping shots time and again.

Sweeper and mid field positions manned by Billy Coeburn, Josh Bertels, Travis Morgan, Rashad Darby and Josh Rollins were instrumental in keeping the ball on the attack.



Brandon's under-8 Ragin' Maniacs show off their tournament trophies.

"The boys played their hearts out and overall it was a wonderful experience they will carry for years to come. They are all winners," said Dodd.

The Maniacs play through March at Handley Field in South Brandon. The next tournament is the Brandon Cup coming up this weekend.

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Eckert Earns Top County Award

by Gazette Staff

Bloomington senior Meghan Eckert was named the top volleyball player in Hillsborough County last month when she was awarded the Allen C. Griffin Memorial Volleyball Award, presented by the school system's athletic department. The three-year letterman is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Eckert of Valrico.

During this past season, Eckert as team captain led the Bulls to the state semi-finals where they fell to the eventual state champions, Parkland Douglas.

As a result of her contribution to the team's 19-4 season, Eckert was named to the Western Conference 1st team, the All-County and All-Suncoast 1st teams, and was an honorable mention on the All-State team.

The petite player at 5-5 1/2 and a mere 105 pounds

has been playing volleyball since the seventh grade when she lived in Hawaii with her military family. While she has received scholarship offers, Eckert is holding out for admission to James Madison University where she hopes to continue playing volleyball.

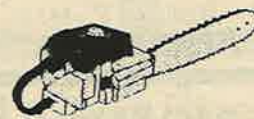
Self-promotion is the key to earning volleyball scholarships, according to Eckert, who feels her chances have been hurt by not participating on a club team.

"Recruits look for athletes on club teams because they get more tournament experience against better players," she said.

Eckert was a member of a club team in Tampa until recently, when differences with the coach made her decide to leave the team.

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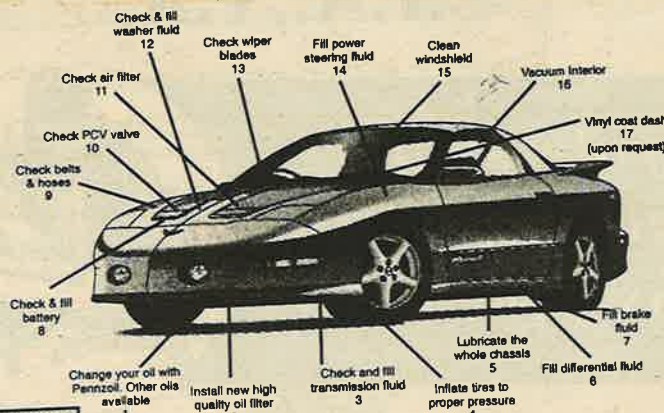
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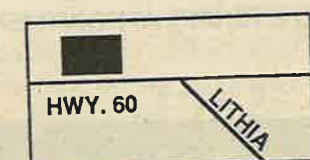
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BHA Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Bloomington Homeowner's Association board will be held Tuesday, Feb 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Suite 101, Royal Oaks of Bloomington Plaza. All dues paying members are invited to attend.

STD Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Bloomington Special Taxing District will be held Monday, Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m. in the Community Office, 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Road, Royal Oaks of Bloomington Plaza. The meeting is open to all residents.

The STD will be taking sealed bids at the above meeting for a NEC Model T-120 cellular phone that comes with antenna, battery pack, stand and recharger that offers 100 minutes of talk time and 20 hours standby. The bids can be mailed to the above address marked "Mobile Phone" or dropped off at the meeting in a sealed envelope.

Local Artist's Display

Center Place of Brandon will feature selected works of local artist June Oros during the month of February. The public is invited to meet her and other featured artist James Van Ingen on Friday, Feb. 17, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at a reception hosted by the Brandon League of Fine Arts.

Oros, a pastels artist, has won the BLFA's prestigious Marge Long Award for Realistic Art, and she is also a first place winner in the Strawberry Festival pastels competition. She has taught art to adults and children for 10 years.

Center Place's Gallery Hours are Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment.

Mail Boxes Etc. Initiates Operation S.W.A.K.

Send Valentine wishes to your sweetheart who may be stationed abroad courtesy of Mail Boxes Etc. which will provide free, first-class postage for Valentine cards and letters sent to U.S. military men and women as well as to veterans in VA hospitals, according to Sue Harbridge, local Mail Boxes owner.

The deadline is Feb. 6 for sending letters or cards to an APO or FPO address to troops assigned to military

posts outside the U.S. and to hospitalized vets. According to Harbridge, Operation: S.W.A.K. (sealed with a kiss) is designed to build the morale of U.S. troops stationed at various military installations and on ships around the world this Valentine's Day.

STD Needs Volunteers

Bloomington's Special Taxing District is in need of volunteer individuals or groups to assist with new plantings at selected entrances to the community. Members of Scout troops, church teen or adult groups, or school service clubs looking to earn community hours are asked to call 681-2051 to leave a contact person's name and number. An STD member will return the call.

The entrance bed planting is part of the ongoing beautification project which was begun by the STD last year. They are hoping to use volunteers in an effort to cut costs which would provide more money for plants.

State Representative Buddy Johnson

Representative Buddy Johnson has scheduled his February Satellite meeting for Bloomington/Valrico to be held at Bike Works, 861 West Bloomington Avenue from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on Monday, February 13.

A staff member will be on hand to assist constituents who have problems with local or state agencies. Written information or documentation relating to the problem should be brought.

For more information call 752-5863.

Florida State Fair

The 1995 Florida State Fair is underway and runs daily through Feb. 19. Live entertainment, midway rides, and game and food concessions as well as ongoing and daily special events highlight the fair. Gates open daily at 9 a.m. and the cost of admission is \$7 for adults and \$4 for children ages six to 11. For further information call 621-7821.

Green Turf Garners Maintenance Contract

by Gazette Staff

The community property around Bloomington will be taking on a new, improved look once the folks with Green Turf have a hand in it.

They have been awarded the maintenance contract with the Special Taxing district and have already gone to work sprucing up the community's appearance.

After months of deliberation, the STD awarded the contract to Green Turf which boasted impressive references including the City of Tampa Beautification Project and

Hillsborough Community College.

"They have done more in the one week they have been here than has been done in the past year," said STD property manager Greg Atkinson.

The STD was particularly careful in awarding this year's contract because of the extensive landscaping that has been completed and is expected to continue.

Included in the new contract for the first time is weed control, fertilization, pruning, and pest control. In the past, these services were at an additional cost to the district.

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Also need a writer to report the area's social news. Call 681-2051.

PART TIME SECRETARY: The Bloomington Special Taxing District (STD) has an opening for a P/T secretary, 8-10 hrs. per wk., plus 1 monthly board meeting. Light filing, computer skills. Send brief resume to STD, Attn: Fred Uphoff, 3232 Lithia Pinecrest Rd., Suite 101, Valrico, 33594

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